

**CAPITOL/DOWNTOWN CENTRAL CORRIDOR TASK FORCE
OCTOBER 3, 2006**

MEETING NOTES

Task Force

Members Present: Susan Rani, Mike Burns, Larry Englund, Phil Mason, Paul Mohrbacher, Kristina Smitten, Craig Lien, Deborah Rathman, Michael Noble, Steve Schmidt, Ta-coumba Aiken

Task Force

Members Absent: John Bennett, Jose Gonzalez, Jerry Hersman, Kim Hyers, Pat Lamb, David Lanegran, Rhys Ledger, Diane Thormodsgard

Guests Present: Ruth Blackman, Roger Sorbel, Mark Voerding, Sheila Lynch, Jennifer Johnson, Tim Griffin, Arlene McCarthy, Peter Bell, Karen Lyons, Mark Fuhrmann

Staff Present: Jess Rosenfeld, Lucy Thompson, Margot Fehrenbacher, Joe Spencer

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chair Kristina Smitten welcomed task force members, who introduced themselves. Guests were also introduced.

Review of Agenda

The agenda was approved as written.

Review of Meeting Notes from September 19, 2006

The meeting notes were accepted as written.

Presentation from Metropolitan Council

Chair Peter Bell presented an overview of the Metropolitan Council's role in the Central Corridor, preliminary engineering activities and timeline, and the various committees he has established to guide the preliminary engineering process. Key points include:

- Central Corridor LRT is Peter Bell's - and the Met Council's - #1 priority.
- MVST (motor vehicle sales tax dedication to roads and transit) must pass in November in order to provide a funding source. Even with the \$120 million over 5 years it is projected to provide, project funding still falls short.
- The construction process will be disruptive, and everyone's voice must be heard.
- Preliminary engineering is estimated to cost \$45 million. Funding sources include federal and state government, and Ramsey and Hennepin counties. Central Corridor is competing with 263 other projects for Federal funds.
- This project will have to "go on a diet." The current project cost estimate is \$930 million, and Bell believes it needs to get below \$800 million. The three items that have been talked about possibly being removed from the project are: 1) the tunnel at the University of Minnesota; 2) streetscape improvements on University Avenue; and 3) LRT on 4th Street to Union Depot. Bell has made no decision about how cost cuts will be accomplished. A decision is expected in mid-2007.
- Central Corridor must be the #1 priority of Ramsey and Hennepin counties, Minneapolis and Saint Paul for the State bonding bill.
- Met Council will build, own and operate the line. Some changes to State law have to be made to transfer MnDOT authority to the Council.

- Groups advising the Met Council Chair will include: a Central Corridor Management Committee, Community Advisory Committee, Land Use Coordinating Committee and Business Advisory Council. Bell will use these groups for feedback on major alignment and project decisions in mid-2007.

Task force members had some questions and comments:

- Will the Southwest Transitway currently being studied by Dakota County compete with Central Corridor? (No.)
- Can the project be speeded up as a way to control costs? (It will be difficult to speed it up, given increased Federal scrutiny of LRT projects.)
- Ta-coumba Aiken encouraged Bell to think of Union Depot as the *beginning* of the line.

Livability 101

Tim Griffin, chair of AIA Saint Paul, presented the American Institute of Architect's national effort to encourage the building of livable communities. Livability 101 challenges new development to address the following issues:

- a sense of place
- mixed-use development
- density
- effective planning for regional transportation
- street-savvy design
- physical health and community design
- public safety and personal security
- sustainable neighborhoods and regional development

In Saint Paul, AIA Saint Paul members will be working with property owners along the Central Corridor to identify development opportunities related to LRT. During Spring 2007, sessions will be held at 20-25 station locations in Saint Paul. A design scrapbook will be prepared in Summer 2007. The Central Corridor Development Strategy will create the planning framework for this design assistance.

Discussion of Future Agendas/Strategy for Task Force Work Sessions

Smitten told the task force that the next several task force meetings will be spent discussing the four issues identified by Urban Strategies (including preferred downtown alignment and key redevelopment opportunities). She would like to start with identifying a set of "guiding principles" for the task force's work, and asked each task force member to bring two principles to the next meeting (or send them to Lucy Thompson ahead of time). These guiding principles will set the foundation for addressing the key issues. At the October 17 meeting, the task force will also begin talking about pros and cons of the downtown alignment options.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lucy Thompson
Senior Planner
October 5, 2006